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THE MEDICAL MISSION SISTERS

Who they are:

The Medical Mission Sisters are a religious community devoted to the care of the sick in the missions. Some of the Sisters are doctors, nurses or pharmacists; others are engaged in secretarial, household and similar duties necessary for medical mission work.

Main Activities

Hospitals, dispensaries, home visiting, leprosaria, training native nurses, training native compounders, maternity and child welfare clinics, establishing native Medical Mission Sisterhoods.

Missions

Africa, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Southern United States.

Houses of the Society

Motherhouse and Novitiate— 8400 Pine Road, Fox Chase, Philadelphia 11, Pa.

House of Studies—6th & Buchanan Sts., Washington 17, D. C.

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YOUR WILL . . . .

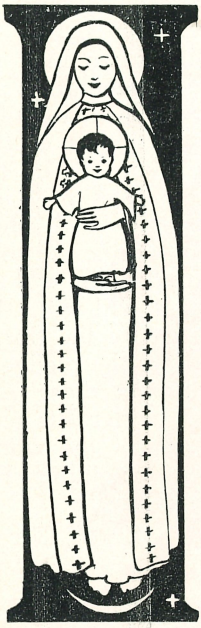
can help the Medical Mission Sisters bring health and healing to the sick and suffering of mission lands. The following approved form of bequest may be used:

"I hereby give (devise) and bequeath to the Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries (also known as the Medical Mission Sisters), an institution incorporated under the laws of the State of Maryland, and its successors forever the sum of $..... for its general purposes."

If you have already made your will, it is not necessary to make a new one. It is sufficient that a codicil be added, using the above form.

CHRISTMAS IS OUR BEGINNING

" . . . And the Word was made flesh"



It certainly was more than mere coincidence that our Holy Father should proclaim the dogma of Our Lady's Assumption into heaven on the glorious feast of All Saints. That day marks the triumphant climax of the Church's year when we honor with a special liturgy all that "great multitude" who stand before the throne of God. And we know that Mary is the Queen of that multitude. Heaven was not complete until the arrival of Her Majesty, at whose coming "the angels rejoice and praising bless the Lord." Tradition tells us that from the earliest times, Christians have believed that Mary was taken up into heaven, there to intercede for them with her Son. In every age and in every land, the Queen of Heaven has heard the sighs of her exiled children, sent up to her from this valley of tears. And so the proclamation of the Assumption as a dogma of the Church is by no means the introduction of a *new* belief among Christians. It is rather the re-affirmation of a very old one, a gigantic shout of joy, sent echoing around the world: "This day the Virgin Mary went up into heaven. Rejoice that she reigns forever with Christ!"

We see in this dogmatic pronouncement of the Assumption of Our Lady an essential relationship to the feast of Christmas. Mary would never have been assumed, body and soul, into heaven, if hers had not been the womb predestined from all eternity to bear the Son of the eternal Father. Her assumption is the reward of her maternity. That body which was to be the chamber of the Bridegroom, was, by God's grace, conceived immaculately in order that Mary might have on the pure white wedding garment for the Divine nuptials. Divinity could only wed a spotless bride. Thus, she whom the Lord had possessed from the beginning of His ways, and by that possession had been kept free from the least taint of sin, could never reap corruptibility. Sinless, she had already put on immortality. But Mary enjoyed her "Virgin's privilege" only because she was to know the "Mother's joy." She was conceived immaculate because she was to conceive the sinless Christ. It was because the root of Jesse was to bud a Saviour that it put forth its leaves in eternity.

And herein lies our hope. Although we know that "not one has ever been, or ever shall be" like Mary, we believe that if we live close to her,

close to the bosom of the Church, then our Christmas will inevitably point to our assumption. But just as Mary had been especially prepared by God from the beginning to be the Mother of His Son, so we too must have our period of preparation before Christ can be born in us. This is why the feast of All Saints seemed such an appropriate one to announce to the whole world the reward of Mary's maternity. The day suggests not only an end but a beginning. The Church now puts away Her green vestments for the purple of Advent in order to remind Her children that they must again prepare in a spirit of silence and penance for the coming of Christ.

And Mary is to be our model. There is kinship between her hidden sanctity and the bare December fields. We do not hear the "alleluias" of the angels now, although their Queen already bears the King within her breast. All is stillness since Gabriel's "Ave" last echoed among the Galilean hills. All is quiet, waiting until those things shall be accomplished in her to which she uttered her incomparable "Fiat." Mary's heart reflects what the Church through Her Advent liturgy desires to accomplish in each one of Her children: to have their souls empty and still for the coming of the Son of God.

Then when the days of Advent are accomplished, we, like our model, must bring forth Christ, so that born again in us, He may continue to dwell among men. For if despite the haste and clamor which surrounds us, we have kept an Advent bower quiet within us, then in the stillness of this Christmas night, the Word will come and take flesh in us and thus remain with the children of men.

That Christ should choose *us* to continue the mystery of His Incarnation is at once our present dignity and our future destiny: our dignity because as other Christs we may extend the work of His redemption and with Him to teach, to heal, to suffer and to pray for all men: our destiny because if Christ is born in us this Christmas, then the rays of Light from the Sun of Justice will shine through us and illumine the darkness of the world. And that Light will not be put out forever. It will shine before men now, and before the throne of God in eternity. It is the pledge of *our assumption on the Last Day* when God gathers together His elect from the four corners of the world. This will be our glorious ending. But Christmas is our beginning.

Sr. M. Gerard

THE CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

"He who has penetrated the meaning of this hymn (Gloria, the Christmas message of the angels) knows where to find a refuge in the stormy succession of events, sufferings and anxieties of the present time, and will keep equally removed from a shallow optimism which ignores the realities, and from the tendency (even less apostolic) which inclines to a timid and depressing pessimism. He is well aware that the life and the action of the Church, just like the life and action of the Saviour, are ever threatened by the henchmen of Herod. Yet he cannot forget that the mysterious star of heavenly grace is shining and will ever shine to guide the souls that seek the divine Child, from error to truth."

Pope Pius XII

RED CHRISTMAS TREE

SR. M. BERNADETTE

One of my Sisters showed me in the newspaper that Hungarians are not allowed to call the Christmas tree by this well known name, but must call our Holy Christmas Day — Fir tree Day. Gone are the candles, the Christmas Crib with the music box, the silver and gold decorations. Being 100% Hungarian in my heart, I felt a little depressed about this news; yet, when you are a religious you must gradually overcome natural feelings, because for us, all things—all men—all our homes—all our work is for God and for souls. Usually in my camp visiting I forget about my homesickness as I see thousands of refugees without homes or consolation, (the great prize of the true faith is not there to help them), and everything is so poor and wretched.

I was walking through the Refugee Camp on that same Sunday that I heard the news about the fir tree, so I stopped at the first barrack where Vilayat, the little Kashmiri, was trying to decorate her cottage window, or rather her little area that she called home, with red paint — drawing small fir trees on the wall. Surely this was not going to help me forget my homesickness, but anyway, I sat down and called Vilayat to talk to me.

"Sister Ji, I am busy with my red fir trees," she said, "just wait a second and I will come." Yes indeed, the fir trees are red these days—especially in that country where I am from, I thought. I almost turned my back and went on with my work when suddenly there was some one holding on to my box. It was Vilayat, "Sister Ji, come and see my trees, they are just like the ones we have up there in our own Kashmir."

"Yes, they are lovely." I had to admire her artistic work.

"I love these trees," Vilayat went on with her story. "I used to hide under them with my brother. Oh, how I loved my brother, Sister Ji."

"Where is your brother?" I interrupted.

"He died on the road when we were fleeing Kashmir."

"Was he older than you, Vilayat?" was my next question.

"Yes, he was bigger than I," she said, "about the size of my pine tree that I painted on that door." She then showed me her masterpiece, the big tree on the door of the entrance to the barrack. Her father had made that door out of old pieces of wood, to protect his small family from the bitter cold, and wind. He was sitting in the corner and he looked very happy that Vilayat and I had become friends. Then she told me how she and her brother used to pick all the pine cones for her mother and how they were used for the fire.

"Oh," she said, "when shall I again see those lovely big pine trees?"—

Well, I thought, Vilayat and I have the same disease and from the same origin, our homesickness for the Christmas tree.

Then I told her my story and she listened very attentively. I told her how at home about this time of year we have a big pine tree in our room and call it a Christmas tree. We decorate it with candles, gold and silver threads and we have the small crib under it. We put the little "bacha" Jesus into the crib which has a music box in it.

Her eyes were growing bigger in

admiration. "Oh, do take me to your home, just once," she said.

"I can't go now, Vilayat, just as you can't go back to your pine - tree - covered country. Moreover, all the pine trees I had in my life I gave to the little Jesus. You don't know Him, Vilayat, but some day you will learn and will know Him. Someday you will again have your tall 'pine trees' and perhaps the Infant Jesus in the crib will be under the tree—to help you to admire the beauty and the love your life will give Him. He loves the poor, and He Himself had to hide under those big trees when He was among us here in this life."

"Do bring the little Jesus to Kashmir, Sister Ji," she begged me.

"Yes I will, someday—and I will decorate a big Christmas tree for you. I am sure you will like it."

Then again I looked up at her work of art, and looking up to her face, my homesickness vanished and I couldn't help but think—when will the time come when all these people can be taught the meaning of Christmas, the Christmas tree, the meaning of the Infant Jesus in the lowly crib? So with confidence I went on and tried to help a few dying "Christmas angels" for Our Lady in Heaven. The day was glorious and with an extra dose of imagination I could hear the Christmas angels singing in that big and dirty refugee camp.

CROWD OUT COMMUNISM BY MISSIONS

In a mission address over the NBC network, the Rt. Rev. Msgr. Fulton J. Sheen, newly named national director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, said the missionaries are in the forefront of those who can crowd out Communism. "Communism can never be driven out; but it can be *crowded* out." Communism cannot make any inroads in areas where missionaries are helping the people to help themselves.

"Let us stop bewailing the evil and begin to do something positive, something constructive, namely feed, nourish, *hospitalize* and teach these people in the name of God," he declared. "All decent people are anti-Communistic, but many have nothing to put in its place. It is not enough to be against something; we must also be for something."

Declaring that the missions are entering into an entirely new role and destiny, Monsignor Sheen said: "Up to this time they have saved souls; now they are called also to save the world. The 20th century is the missionary century. Every person in the world is being solicited for his allegiance either to the forces of God or anti-God."

"We need help to save the world from Communism," he continued, "not by telling others how terrible the Communists are but by telling, living, and acting out the wondrous love of God and neighbor preached by Our Lord and socialized in His Mystical Body."

Mission Sunday Broadcast, October 22, 1950

A GLANCE AT THE PHILIPPINES

REV. THOMAS H. REILLY, S. J., Philippine Islands

About 1921 the entire sland of Mindanao was turned over to the American Jesuits of the Maryland-New York Province. Prior to that this rich field for souls had been cultivated by the Spanish Jesuits. One can truly gauge the very remarkable progress that has been made since that time, by a quick glance at the Ecclesiastical Directory of the Philippines, which shows that Mindanao is now divided into three dioceses and two Prefectures Apostolic with Oblates, French Canadian Missionaries, Dutch Missionaries, Columban and Claretian Missionaries in the field.

Some of our Jubilee postulants. Dr. Los Banos and Dr. de Guzman from the Philippines, front right.

Such an estimate as the above can in no wise detract from the fruitful labors of the Spanish Fathers. Any missioner who has taken over where the Spanish Jesuits labored will attest to their stalwart faith and indefatigable efforts, to say nothing of their shining good example. On horseback, by carabao, much of the time afoot, through the jungle, over mountains, fording swollen streams, with precious little in the way of food or comfort, they were constantly on the go, baptizing, marrying, preparing children for First Communion, building chapels.

The Second World War did indeed disrupt the normal flow of Catholic activity in the Islands. But in no sense did it quench the lamp of faith. If anything, the people have emerged with a new glow for things Catholic. They saw their neighbor killed; they themselves stood on the brink of destruction. That they have survived, they rightly attribute to the Providence of God. They are ready to go forward and sincerely wish to perfect their Catholic lives. The field is white for the harvest; the laborers are few.

We need above all a native clergy. The Filipino boy will aspire readily to a place in the professions or a government career and at great sacrifice he will secure the education necessary, but for many reasons his thoughts do not turn to the Priesthood. You in the U. S. who have an abiding interest in these islands should storm heaven during the month of December for vocations to our native clergy.

The Understanding Heart

International Congress of Nurses

"Il Papa! Il Papa! Il Papa!" roared a hundred thousand voices as the sudden glow of 30 thousand lights turned the twilight of St. Peter's into glittering day. The big doors swung open and the Holy Father appeared in the Sedia Gestatoria. From where I stood, I could not see the Holy Father for a moment or two, and I was a little amused at the tears running down the cheeks of my fellow-sardines, with whom I was closely packed. Then suddenly I saw him—and the tears began to stream down *my* face, and I found myself applauding and crying "Il Papa" for all *I* was worth.

At first, the Holy Father began to bless the people with one hand; then with both hands; then as the enthusiasm of the crowd mounted, he stood up so that the people could see him more plainly and would be more conscious of his blessing. His face was aglow with love and pleasure at being able to welcome and to bless so many of his children, both Catholic and non-Catholic (as I discovered) from every corner of the world.

When the chair reached the steps of the main altar, the Holy Father stepped from it to the simple red and gold throne, and as he sat down his white-clad form shone out clearly against the red background.

"Silenzio, Silenzio," commanded a voice over the loud speaker. But it took many "silenzio's" to quiet the cheerings of all those who had been able to squeeze into St. Peter's.

Perhaps the biggest and the most important group in the audience on September 6th was the International Congress of Nurses, which I was attending. There were thousands of nurses from practically every country of the world. Some were in the uniforms of their various hospitals and nations. Many were in Religious habits; some in civilian clothes. They made an attractive picture as they listened attentively to the Holy Father's address to them.

His Holiness pointed out the great need for nurses who are real CHRISTIANS—stressing the necessity of courage; the great obligation they have of being true to the laws of God; and their need of a solid spiritual foundation in addition to their scientific knowledge, which must also be up-to-date and sound.

(At the opening of the Congress, Cardinal Pizzardo had already urged that the nurses be enlightened and well-educated, and that their technical and scientific education be as complete as possible, so that they would be better able to cope with the great problems confronting Christian nurses in the present-day world. "It is better," boomed His Eminence, in his deep, rich, Italian voice, "to have four diplomas than to have one!")

After the audience at St. Peter's was over, the enormous crowd began to struggle through the huge doors to mix with thousands of people in the piazza who had been unable to get in. But the Pope's great, understanding heart was touched by the disappointment of those who were turning sadly away without having

seen him. He had hardly reached his room in the fourth story of the Vatican when a light flashed on, and the Holy Father appeared at the window, from which his figure could be clearly seen by the immense crowds below. He waved to them, he blessed them, but they simply would not let him go. Finally, even while the cheering continued, he flung out his arms and gave the people a tremendous blessing.

While returning to the convent, I lost my way in the little streets around St. Peter's. Suddenly, I saw a car approaching, accompanied by two motorcycles.

"Oh," I said to myself, with one driver's sympathy for another, "the poor man has had an accident." I was looking intently at the car for the signs of damage when suddenly someone shouted, "Il Papa!" It was the Holy Father returning to Castel Gandolfo. I just about burst with pride, and somehow I was touched to the heart. The tall, white-clad figure of the Holy Father was sitting in the car with the inside lights on, blessing and waving to the people as he passed. There was no fear of bullets or daggers—only a heart filled with a great love for the people. An ordinary person would have settled back in the car and said to himself, "Thank God, that is over." But not the Holy Father. He knew that it would please his children to get one more blessing and one more glimpse of him. I happened to be standing alone as he passed, and I got a whole, complete blessing to myself.

Next day, I found my way to an audience at Castel Gandolfo. There were only a few thousand people there, and the Holy Father spoke to us very informally from a small balcony. He seemed like an angel. One author has called him the "Gentle Christ at the Vatican." Seeing him, one loves God more for having seen and loved the Holy Father.

I bless you, your family, your relatives, your friends, your benefactors, your work, all those for whom you work, all the desires of your heart. Pius XII

From the little balcony, the Pope laughed and joked and teased the people. He was merrily humorous. He was kind, fatherly—and beautiful. His hands were lovely, every gesture was full of grace. His white cassock was immaculate, and the wide, ribbon-like cincture looked brand new. But it was the expression on his face that was most arresting . . . particularly when he smiled.

"Where are you from?" he asked one little group.

"We are students at Georgetown University."

"Oh, a beautiful university," said the Holy Father.

"Were you at St. Peter's yesterday?" he asked the crowd. Some said, "Yes" and others, "No."

"Did you not have a good place?"

"No," said nearly everyone.

"Did you not see enough?"

"NO-O-O-O," replied the crowd.

"Have you seen enough now?"

"No! No! No!"

No one could ever see enough of the Holy Father!

Then turning to a group of missionaries, "Ah, we need good missionaries today. The missions are in great need of numbers of apostolic, zealous, hard-working souls, who will devote their lives and make sacrifices for those under their care."

"Speak to us in English, Holy Father," cried a voice at one of the audiences (I attended seven). Immediately, the Holy Father complied with the simplicity of a child—or a saint. Love and simplicity are his two outstanding traits in his meetings with the great crowds at St. Peter's.

But if the Pope loves the people, how they love him! On the streets, I had many occasions to ask my way. Often I was asked if I thought Il Papa was "buono." My answer was, "No, not 'buono,' but 'buonissimo!'" The Romans were delighted to hear that even a non-Roman thought the Pope as wonderful as they did themselves.

Outside the Piazza of St. Peter's, they have named the adjacent street, "Pius the XII, the Savior of the City," in gratitude to the Holy Father for having (it is said) gone down on his knees to the German High Command to beg them not to bomb Rome.

One of my seven audiences was a semi-private one at Castel Gandolfo. My permit was for one Sister and her two Religious companions. But alas I had no Religious companions—the Dutch Medical Mission Sisters had already returned to Holland. And as I had only received the letter at 10 P.M. and the audience was at 11 A.M. the next day, I had no opportunity of finding anyone to go with me. On my way out I met two English priests and told them my story.

"Oh, there are two American girls coming in a taxi in the hope that they may see the Holy Father."

"But," I objected, "it says 'Religious.'"

"They are religious—good, pious girls," laughed one of the priests.

"Father," I said, "if you want to manage this, take my permit with yours."

"Glad to," he responded.

Presently, along came my two "religious" companions. One was dressed in bright red, the other in bright green. After a careful counting of noses, at least four times, we finally reached a large audience chamber. Our names were called that we might be introduced to the Holy Father in proper order. I had to walk half way down the long room with the high heels of my green and red religious click-clicking loudly behind me.

When the Holy Father came in, he was graciousness itself, and he actually spoke back and forth to me for two or three minutes. Then he gave me a medal, and I told him that I and my two companions were really there under the permit of three other Sisters who could not come, but who wanted to have the medals . . . Would he give me three more medals? The Holy Father actually chuckled and gave me three more. Did he think: Bold Americans?

I am still asking myself the question, what is it about the Holy Father that drew me like a magnet? Myself, and millions of others. To get to see him is like being thrown to the lions. One sets out for Castel Gandolfo about five hours before the audience; stands in the blazing sun for two or three hours at Castel Gandolfo, squeezed in the midst of a crowd; then waits in the courtyard for another hour and finally arrives home between 8 and 9 P.M. in a state of exhaustion, thinking nothing of it—only, "Perhaps tomorrow I can get his blessing again!"

GERTRUDE FROM KARACHI

MEET THE PEOPLE

SISTER M. REGINA, R. N.

A thin girl of about 8 or 9 years of age, in a dark wooden crib-bed, her body in a constant jerky, wriggling motion—bright black eyes—stiff bushy hair—signs of spilled food on her clothing—an unclean child with lice in her hair—these are some of the pictures which pass through my mind as I remember Gertrude when I first saw her in May, 1948.

Two years later, look at Gertrude—a little girl in a wheel-chair, clean, proud of her new green silwar and kurta, hair arranged with a bright ribbon, the movements of the legs somewhat controlled by a canvas restraint, talking, laughing, visiting other patients, and asking to go with Sister to shop in the bazaar!

Gertrude, abandoned by her parents when still a baby, was brought to Karachi by one of the Mission Fathers from Nawabashah, Sind, in 1941. From birth, she was a spastic. When she came under our care, you can imagine what we did first. We called in a barber, had her hair shaved off, scrubbed her clean and had new clothes made for her. She had her teeth cleaned regularly with a new, bright red tooth-brush and some Colgate's toothpaste (that, we had received in a box from America.)

Gertrude loved this attention. She quickly developed such a sense of cleanliness herself, that if something happened to spill on her sheet or her clothes, she would ask for a clean one. Once we had a nurse in the ward who neglected her. Gertrude reported it to Sister like this: "Sister ji"—Sister looked—Gertrude pointed to her teeth and said "No." And "Sister ji, No," pointing to her dirty kurta. The nurse-aide admitted that she had not done it.

Trying to get Gertrude to eat a properly balanced diet was not so easy. She had been given her way in the matter of food, consequently, she ate only what she liked—usually a little rice and curry, tea and bread. She loved visiting hour, when all the patients would have visitors and most of them would come over for a little visit with Gertrude. The most effective means to get Gertrude to eat what she should was to draw the

curtains around her bed during visiting hour. She quickly learned to eat what was on her tray and now even enjoys eggs for which she had a special aversion.

A big change in Gertrude's life came when she was transferred from her long, dark crib to a hospital bed just like all the other patients. She could see more; she was less of an oddity. Her bed could be shifted next to different patients — a helpful broadening advantage. She learned to love this opportunity of meeting different children and older women.

Perhaps the biggest factor in Gertrude's development was the wheel chair. We had one wheel chair, the usual hospital variety, much too large for Gertrude. One day a Hindu man walked into the hospital and offered the hospital one. He said that his mother had used it when she was alive. Since he was leaving Pakistan for India (this was shortly after the Partition days), he wanted the wheel chair to be used for some good purpose. It was just right for Gertrude. Until this time she had never been up in a chair. With a bolster under the knees, and her knees tied together to keep them from jumping Gertrude can sit in the chair. At first she would get one of the staff to put her behind the hospital in a secluded corner away from people. Now she cannot wait to get out with people, the more the better.

The next two things we want to show her are trains and airplanes. She has no idea what a train is or what we mean when we say, "Sister is going away on a train." **If only somebody would give us money for a collapsible wheel chair we could take her to the suburban station near the hospital or to the airport to see the planes coming in. We could even take her to the zoo!**

The nicest thing about Gertrude is her sense of humor. She joins in the teasing and jokes of the staff. She is really a part of the family. The Goan kitchen girls, the wardboys, the sweepers and even the cook all have a special affection for her and always find an opportunity to admire her new clothes or trinkets, or make a special effort to see her and greet her on a feast day because they know it means so much to her. And no one can take advantage of her. Once a new sweeper, thinking that Gertrude could not talk, took her new hair clip. Gertrude could not wait until morning to tell Sister about it. The report went like this: "Sister ji," and pointed to her hair—"Gone."

Sister said: "Who took it?"—and then started mentioning names. Gertrude kept shaking her head "no" until Sister said: "Night Mehtrani" — Then she shook her head "yes"—She was r i g h t, the n i g h t mehtrani denied the theft, but in the course of the day, the clip returned to Gertrude.

Gertrude loves being one of the f a m i l y and is never so delighted as when someone comes dashing through the ward asking where is John the ward-boy or Rufina the nurse-aide. She cries out excitedly as she points with her crooked little hand in wild erratic movements to the next room or front verandah where she has just heard or seen John or Rufina. Like every other human individual, she too, has the desire to be needed.

Although Gertrude attends Benediction frequently, and manages to make the sign of the Cross and say a few prayers, she has not yet been able to take sufficient instructions to receive Holy Communion. It will certainly be a very happy day for all of us when that happens. Then she will really belong to the family.

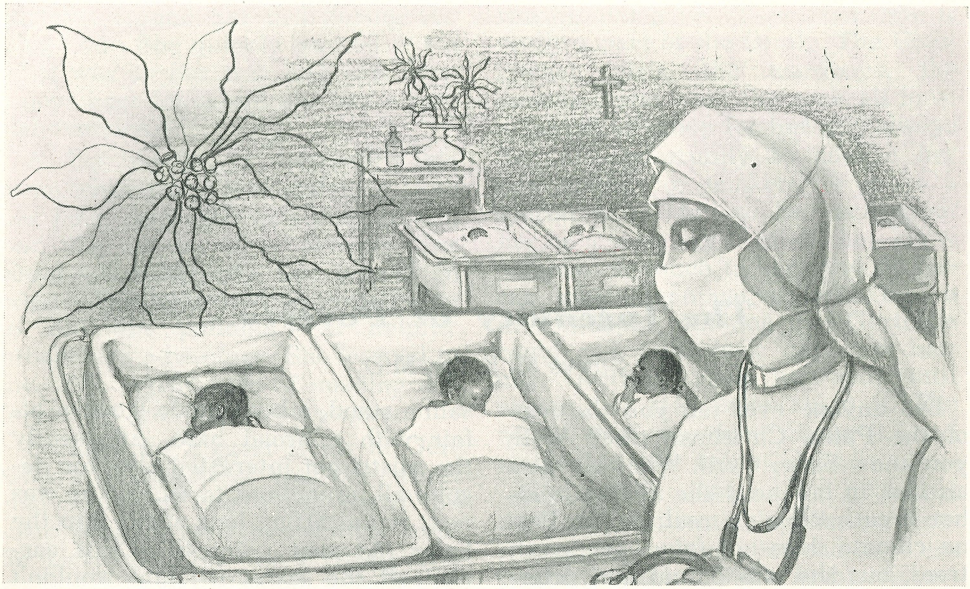
The Ingenuity of Poverty

SISTER M. ELISE, M.D.

Did anyone ever tell you the saga of the Patna Christmas tree? Well, you know Sister Cyril. When she gets an idea in her head she all but holds her breath till it's a reality. The Patna climate does not favor evergreen trees, but she was bound and determined to have a tree for the nurses. In fact, she had homemade ornaments ready, all put together from silver paper, plastic pill boxes, cotton wool and silver paint.

But the tree was more of a stickler. We kept telling her that 'Only God can make a tree,' but that didn't stop her. Pretty soon we found our lakrimistri (carpenter) on the Cathedral verandah, boring holes in our old saline stand, a homemade wooden affair with a broad base. Apparently the mistri got interested also, for despite all injunctions to secrecy he was next found fitting long sticks into the holes. At that point Sr. Cyril carried off the scarecrow and wouldn't let anyone near it till she had all the bare sticks tenderly wrapped around with green branches and so hung, full of ornaments that you could hardly see the tree! But after Midnight Mass, in the silvery candlelight, and stacked high with presents around its base, nothing could have been more effective!

Sr. Cyril's home-made Christmas tree produced happy smiles on the faces of these native nurses, a few of the 52 in training at Holy Family Hospital.



Surgeon for Six Million

SR. M. BENEDICT, M.D.

"Come quickly, Doctor. There's a patient waiting in your office who seems to be acutely ill." Sister Xavier was usually not an alarmist so I hurried towards the dispensary wondering what this case would be. It seemed to me that we had had about everything in the books today.

Practicing medicine in Pakistan is surely different from America. It was now already late afternoon and I had just come from the O. R.

St. Michael's is the only place in the Mymensingh District where surgery is available. It seems unbelievable in a community of 6,000,000.

Ward rounds on our 42 in-patients had rapidly followed in the wake of Holy Mass and breakfast. (Scenes both comical and tragic presented themselves as we went from bed to bed in the three women's wards. Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Bengali and Garo lay side by side in the order in which they had been admitted.)

First to arrest our attention had been Parul, the young Hindu widow. (Once she must have been very beautiful but at the death of her husband she had in accordance with Hindu custom shaved her head and donned the unadorned white sari of Hindu widows. She would never be permitted to marry again.)

Parul had been badly in need of an operation for several years but was desperately poor. About five days previously, we had accomplished the abdominal surgery. Everything had gone well for the first two post-operative days—the patient had received parenteral feedings. On the third day not one morsel of food had passed her lips. Her little son had not been permitted by his guardian to bring the prescribed rice and milk —Parul would touch nothing from the hands of our Christian cook. No amount of coaxing or cajoling on my part had had the slightest effect. Even

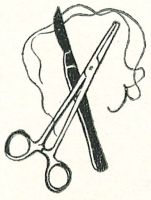
the argument that food from our kitchen was just as much medicine as tablets from our pharmacy failed to win the point. Now I was faced with the problem of how to overcome the resultant weakness and abdominal distention. Oh, for the blood plasma and synthetic amino-acids so readily available at home. Even though my patience had been tried well beyond the breaking point, I could not help admiring Parul's observance of law.

For the next few minutes, the line of pale, peaked faces ravaged by malnutrition and anemia drew my attention. Repeated attacks of Kala-azar and malaria were responsible for the present state of most of them.

Then we came to the smiling face of Kamla, a young Mohammedan girl, scarcely more than a child. She was happy now with her beautiful first-born son. Several days before she had been brought to us, filthy dirty, accompanied by two old toothless, equally dirty dhais (native midwives). Both repeated over and over — "Doctor, memsahib, the baby's been coming for three days and we haven't seen him yet."

Needless to say, that was all we needed to start the professional "ball rolling" with the necessary rapidity so that little Abdul would become a living reality. I well knew that the patient had spent those three days in a dirty shack outside her home as expectant mothers are considered unclean. As I looked at Kamla, there passed quickly before my eyes the long procession of similar cases and worse, which had already found their way to our door in the one year of St. Michael's existence.

Konok, Bala and Rhada Rani, the two little Hindu girls who had been with us almost a year now always insisted on having their beds side by side whenever there threatened to be a shift in population. Konok had grown so, since she had been admitted! As I looked at her I remembered well the pitiful sight she had been when her penniless father had brought her from the village to us. Some months before her clothes had caught fire and her left arm, hand and the left side of her chest had been badly burned. At the time of admission, dense scars held her elbow in constant flexion (bent at right angles) and her left arm from shoulder to elbow was fixed to her chest wall. After almost a year and three plastic operations, Konak could now move her elbow freely and lift her whole arm above her head. Her daily question was, "Doctor, Kobey barite jaite paribo?" (When will I be able to go home?)



Konok Bala was smart as a whip and Rhada Rani was her true friend. Rhada, being about five or six years older than Konok, had undertaken to teach her the rudiments of reading and writing. Rhada too, had smiled this morning. For three years before coming to St. Michael's she had had an ugly osteomyelitis of her right tibia. She had been a veritable outcast in her bari (home), because of the stench from her leg. She had been to doctor after doctor and the answer was always the same—"amputate the leg." Finally, she came to our office. Rhada had smiled this morning because a few days ago, she had walked for the first time without her crutches. Thank God for penicillin and the modern American surgical treatment of "osteo."

Next, we had hastily donned masks and gowns for the visit to the newborn nursery. We went from cradle to cradle—the Caesarean baby of a few days before was so sweet! Her head was lovely and round and she had such tiny features. At last we came to Pascal—our ward. "Pascie," as Sister M. Louise had nick-named him, seemed to be holding his own

at last. The past two weeks had been a struggle for him as it always is for new-borns in the Orient when their mothers abandon them, or die.

Rounds had ended with Ram Chandra, the last patient in the men's ward. It was so good to see him moving his left leg! He's still giving me anxious moments, though. What a case he had been!! From the time I had received the urgent note from his family doctor to go to his home in consultation — to the resulting emergency operation! When I first saw him, Ram Chandra complained of only two things—a severe headache for two weeks and inability to move his left arm and leg for 36 hours. Careful neurological examination had confirmed my impression that the patient had an intracranial space-taking lesion on the right side. After much consultation all his neighbors and friends and the doctor finally agreed with me that the emergency operation should be done. I shall never forget the amazed expression on the Bengali Sister-nurses' faces as they watched the operation progress. They were seeing a trephining (the removal of a button of skull bone in order to afford access to the contents of the cranium) for the first time. When the bone was removed and the epidural abscess evacuated, their eyes literally popped. In less than 24 hours Ram Chandra was already moving his leg — prognosis looked very hopeful.

I smiled as I suddenly remembered the comment which one Reverend patient had called to another Reverend patient in an adjoining private room last night, as I had been busy with mallet and chisel after laying aside the trephine—"What on earth's going on in the O. R.—sounds like a plumber fixing a leak." Oh, for thick walls! There's one thing I'm sure of in our new building (which we need so badly) the partitions are going to be five-inch brick walls so that everything that goes on will not be audible throughout the premises.

At 8:30 A.M. office hours had begun and had lasted until well past dinner. After dinner three operations!

I hurried down the veranda towards the office where the "acutely ill" patient waited. The patient was indeed very ill. There was no doubt that she required surgical attention. I asked her husband why he had not brought her to the hospital sooner. His answer was an indifferent shrug of his shoulders. His final statement was that he would bring the patient for admission the *next* day as their law stated that tomorrow was a good day for admission—

Knowing from experience that it was useless to argue further, I sighed and agreed to the admission the following day. Such is the practice of medicine in a tropical mission hospital!

The Constitution of the W H O (World Health Organization) affirms that the health of all peoples is fundamental to the attainment of peace and security.

MAY THEY REST IN PEACE

The Most Rev. Sylvester P. Mulligan, O.F.M. Cap., Archbishop of Delhi, India

Mother Mary Ethelburga, Assumption Convent, Phila., Pa.

Sister M. Imelda Finneran, S.S.J., Baden, Pa.

Sister M. Holy Cross Walsh, C.S.C., St. Mary's, Indiana

Sister M. Patrice O'Reilly, R.S.M, Hartford, Conn.

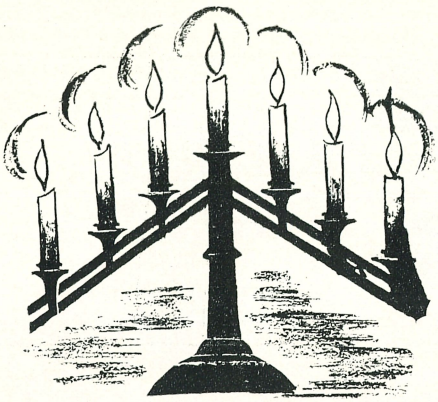
Mr. Frederick Hortsch, Vienna, Austria (Father of Sr. M. Cantas, SCMM.)

Mrs. Mary La Bombard (Mother of Sr. M. Stephen SCMM), Lebanon, N. H.

Lieut. Col. Patrick O'Gorman, C.M.G., M.D., M.R.C.P., D.P.H., London, Eng.

Mrs. Millie Stolteben, Dubuque, Iowa

Miss Caroline Waller, Phila, Pa.



WE'RE FROM MUSSOORIE

by SISTER M. THADDEUS, R. N.

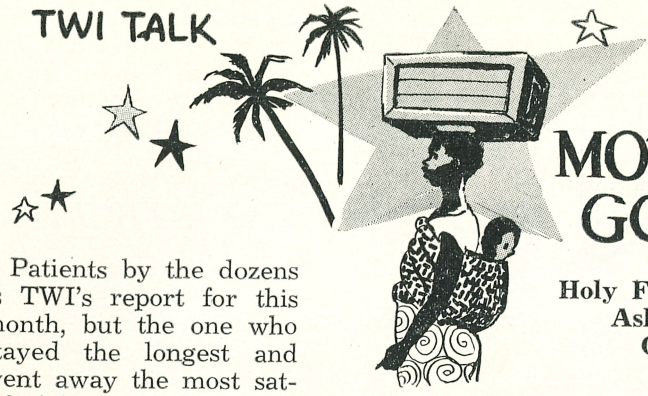
The box of chapel things arrived in time to have our finery on the altar and Father's back for the feast of the Ascension. Didn't we feel both elegant and liturgical with a real thurible and incense boat and candlesticks with a polished finish?? There I was kneeling on a little kneeler admiring the new altar cards and blinking at the polished candlesticks, dutifully saying the responses. Little did I suspect the tragedy that was about to befall me.

It didn't concern me when Sr. Marcella, M.D. was called out of chapel . . . but she didn't come back. The next thing I knew I was mumbling a feeble "Deo Gratias" . . . It was time for Benediction. No Sister Marcella! Stark . . . Staring Tragedy . . .

You will recall that there are three of us here in Mussoorie. That's enough for a trio, but Sister Vincent doesn't sing. That leaves two: Sister Marcella, who sings well and Sister Thaddeus who sings loud . . . *We* are the choir . . . a doubtful duo indeed. So there I was, a choir without a voice. No Sister Marcella . . . The butterflies in my stomach fluttered their wings and fanned the pharyngeal frogs into my throat. I knew I couldn't count on the two nurses in the back row to chirp in with me; the minute I started to sing they would start to giggle. It was inevitable. Sister Vincent almost fell out of her pew as she leaned over to glare me into starting the hymn . . .

Very well, I will commence . . . You may find this hard to believe, but it is true. Of all the variations of the Tantum Ergo, that we know, I couldn't think of one of them. To stall for time and the descent of the Holy Ghost I started to sing the O Salutaris . . . hoping against hope that the nurses would join in. They didn't. Father tried to swell the choir, but by the time he started I was two squeaks above high eek and his basso profundo just made things worse! The nurses were shaking the polished candlesticks with their unseemly mirth. And for the Tantum . . . I just closed my eyes and opened my mouth and to this day I don't know what tune I sang, but I suspect that instead of a variation of the Tantum, it was a Tantum with variations. You think you've got troubles . . . And, the performance was repeated at Pentecost. It's your duty to pray for vocations with voices! I was remarking afterwards to Sr. Marcella that no doubt my vocal cords were remarkable proof of the amazing range of the human voice . . . Said Sr. Marcella, M.D., "It didn't sound human."

The monsoon is well under way and everything is getting mouldy. Sister Anastasia was just remarking about the "freckles" on my face but I assured her that it was "mildew."



MOTHER GOOSE

Holy Family Dispensary
Ashanti District
Gold Coast

Patients by the dozens is TWI's report for this month, but the one who stayed the longest and went away the most satisfied deserves special mention. Someone named her "Mother Goose," and the name fits her perfectly.

She came in one Saturday afternoon holding a little speck of a baby, only four days old. Neither she nor her husband knew what was wrong with the infant. They had given it all sorts of native medicine to drink, scarred its cheek and rubbed in pot soot (their custom for prevention of convulsions), and tied on fetish strings and charms, but the infant had only become worse. Then the parents had walked several miles from their village to the main road to get a lorry for the twenty mile trip here—which doesn't seem a great distance unless one knows what it is like to sit crowded on a plank seat, bounce over a corrugated dirt road, and eat the red dust raised by the preceding traffic in the midst of the African heat. When Sister M. Paula took the tiny baby in her arms, she wondered that it had survived the journey at all.

Apparently the baby was beyond hope . . . she had pneumonia, dysentery, and acute toxicity from native medicine. She was made a little child of God: baptized Anna. Sister did all she could for the baby, gave it medicine, etc., then left them sitting watching her. She told them she would be back soon. When Sister came out of Chapel after Rosary, Mother Goose was there, waiting for her. "The baby is still sick," was all she would say. Mother Goose seemed to think that we did not realize how sick Anna was; we wondered that she did not realize that Anna was dying.

Came evening, and the baby was still breathing. Sister gave it more medicine by tube, said a few consoling words to the parents and explained that they might go home now if they wished. Generally when the family realizes that the case is hopeless they prefer to take the patient back to die in their own village. But not Mother Goose. She had no intention of leaving. While here, the baby was living, which was more than it would do if they went home. They had brought a sleeping mat, pillow, a bundle of cloths. *He* would go into town and buy some kanki (fermented corn mush, wrapped and steamed in banana leaves) for their evening meal, and a few penny candles for light. They had not thought much about sleeping arrangements—on the verandah, probably, if we did not mind.

So they settled down for the night in the dispensary, small Anna between them on a pillow and a hot water bottle. Next morning, to Sister's surprise, the baby was still alive —but not by any means well. Little Anna received tube feedings every four hours, but it seemed that she

could not shake off the toxicity. The next day, to our greater surprise, she was still alive and even a little better. Mother Goose did not seem surprised. She had known quite simply that everything would be all right once she got the baby here. During dispensary hours she kept out of the way, sitting on the back verandah in the sun, her legs out perfectly straight before her, resting the tiny baby on her knees. Small and motherly, with round, round eyes, much like those of her baby, Mother Goose looked far too young to have had ten children. She had lost all but four of them, so she was determined to keep this one.

By the fourth day, Anna had put on several ounces and was sleeping like a queen in the lined wooden box labeled "Dried Milk, 12 tins." Sister suggested to Mother Goose that it would be safe for her and the baby to go home now. Mother Goose was not to be rushed. Her husband had gone back to their village, promising to return for her in a few days. She would wait. Saturday morning, they were finally ready to go. They had the small bottle of codliver oil and the feeding dropper for the baby along with their pillow, mat and cloths. They had their dispensary ticket, too. Yes, they would bring Anna back in two weeks. Everyone shook hands and Mother Goose poured out her thanks. Sister told her to thank God for the recovery.

One thing more—the box. Anna had been so sick . . . and she had gotten well in this box. Perhaps if she were taken away from it . . . ? They would return it on the next visit . . . So we gave them the box, for keeps. Then, more handshakes, and they were off— Mother Goose gracefully balancing the box on her head, and little Anna peeping out from the carrying-cloth on Mama's back with her round black eyes. Mother Goose's voice didn't say it, but her eyes did: "I knew that the Sisters would make my baby well."

TWI is the basic language spoken in the Ashanti District of the Gold Coast where the Medical Mission Sisters conduct Holy Family Dispensary.

CHRISTMAS GIFT SUBSCRIPTION ORDER FORM

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NO ROOM IN THE - - - - CHAPEL

DEAR FRIEND OF ST. JOSEPH:

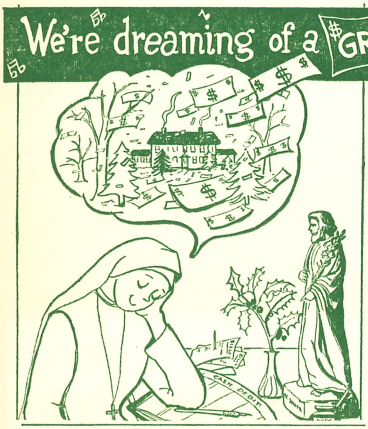
It is really about St. Joseph's worries that we are coming to you now.

Not only is there no room in the chapel this Christmas for our own Sisters, but even for the crib. Our overcrowded conditions have ABSOLUTELY reached their limit. Money or no money, ground was broken for a larger chapel, dormitory and refectory. This is to be completed in six months. The cost—$118,000. That means a bill of $20,000 every month.

You know what it is to be faced with bills. DIRE NECESSITY forces us to have faith that St. Joseph will pay these bills for us through his friends.

As HIS FRIEND will you help us? Honestly, we need it NOW.

Trustfully Yours, MOTHER ANNA DENGEL, M. D.



Dear Mother Dengel:

My Christmas gift $..... in honor of St. Joseph for your chapel.

Name .....

Address .....

City ..... Zone ..... State .....

Medical Mission Sisters, 8400 Pine Road, Philadelphia 11, Pa.